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THE INDIA CULTURES QUARTERLY

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NOTICE

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Readers in India are advised that the subscription fee is Rs 2 for salaries of Rs 200 or less, and Rs 4 for salaries of Rs 201 or more. Note that henceforth Dr R. D. Immanuel will be in charge of editorial matters (as in the past), and Dr H. H. Presler will be responsible for the Mid-India feature and assisting with the business details.

INTRODUCING STRANGERS TO HINDUISM

Dr Henry H. Presler

My privilege in this series of lectures shall be to introduce strangers to Hinduism. What is a stranger?

A stranger is a person living within a community who does not enjoy the status of a native. The stranger may be well-educated; yet the illiterate withholds recognition. The stranger may be rich, able to buy an entire village; but the inhabitants refuse him lodging. The stranger may be harmless; yet the local leaders appoint one of their number to watch him.

The lot of a stranger is not easy. Strangers to Jerusalem were kept outside, in the court of the Gentiles. Strangers to Athens were considered barbarians. Strangers to New York have been called 'chinks,' 'dagoes,' 'frogs', 'greasers', 'sheenies' and 'wops'.

Throughout the world, there is an ever-recurring view of things in which, to paraphrase Summer, 'one's own group is the center of everything, and strangers are scaled and rated with reference to it'. Ethnocentrism confronts the stranger everywhere, but not to the same extent. In the Indian peninsula I have found less uneasiness and more hospitality to me as a stranger, than in other places along my journeys around the globe. The Hindus are consistently gentle and kind toward outsiders. They are open-minded and tolerant. They begin by assuming a stranger is a gentleman, and afford him courtesy until he deserves otherwise. They are appreciative of any sincere inquiry into their mode of life and quick to co-operate with one who offers friendship. When one considers how often in past history strangers have overrun and misused them, he marvels the more at their generosity and restraint today. Yet, outsiders may not enjoy the status of a native among them.

Unfortunately, we strangers have not done our utmost to reduce the exterior differences between ourselves and them. We may be their brothers under the skin, while allowing superficial customs, ideas and attitudes to hamper the Hindus' effort to be in rapport with us. We may honestly intend to learn as much as possible of their socio-religious system called Hinduism, while behaving in such a manner as to define ourselves as alien. If it is Hinduism we wish to understand, then we shall have to begin by ordering our speech and actions so as to make ourselves more acceptable to Hindus . . . more amenable, less rigid; more conscious of their folkways, less careless of their feelings.

After all, we cannot expect the Hindus to be absolutely free of ethnocentrism. They, like us, feel a mixture of uncertainty and dread, of curiosity and dismay, of reservation with a stranger, for such is the human psychological reaction. Complete relaxation with and trust of strangers would be superhuman. What Hindus have so admirably controlled and subdued, needs an equally generous effort

from our side. We need to become conscious of customs, ideas and attitudes such as erect barriers, and to attempt to lower the hurdles between us. In sum, the first step in understanding Hinduism is to try to make ourselves more acceptable to Hindus.

At this point, somebody may say, There are different kinds of Hindus. To which kind would you suggest we try to make ourselves welcome? My answer is, to all; but particularly I would have us to attempt to behave so as to avoid, as far as possible, any affront to the folkways of the orthodox. By orthodox Hindus are meant the overwhelming majority of Hindus who subscribe to the main features of the written and oral scriptures of Hinduism. I am not stressing the Westernized Indian, of whom there are few.

I

1. How, then, might we make ourselves more acceptable to Hindus? Let me begin with customs. Does it startle you to hear me say that we may give offence to an orthodox Hindu even before speaking or acting. Our very presence is rendered disagreeable, not because of any prejudice against us on his part, formed by the newspaper or by some rudeness from one of our kind in the past. It is not anything we do or fail to do that makes us offensive. It is the way we (who are meat-eaters) smell to them (who are vegetarians). People who abstain entirely from animal food are able to perceive from our breath, or from the exudation of our skin, our alien diet.

You will recall how your boyhood schoolroom was made acutely aware of the presence of an immigrant boy who ate 'that which was not fitting'. Even though he sat in the back row, and entered after the bell rang, and even though your eyes were on the front blackboard, you could tell he had come in late by the odor from his lunch.

If it were possible for you to blindfold me, and to take me by air to unknown stops, I might identify by their smells, an Austrian *Gasthof*, a French *Restaurante*, an Italian *Populaire Spaghetti*. I think I could identify a Japanese from a Chinese restaurant. In fact, I might even dare to differentiate between a North Indian and a South Indian eating establishment and merely by the odors of the foods. Did it ever occur to you that your kind of diet produces inevitable body odors that can be detected by the Hindus? A Brahmin told me good-naturedly that never in his life had he tasted meat, but that he could tell I had eaten chicken curry for lunch. Then I began to recall my own disgust . . . however irrational it may have been . . . with the immigrant boys who came smelling of their (to me) obnoxious food. Added to this was the realization that my meal of chicken had involved violence (himsa), the taking of a life for the sake of my stomach, an affront to the moral code of a Brahmin friend. I could only wonder at his generous behaviour towards me.

My reason for raising this matter of diet and resultant body odor is simply to stab us awake to the many ways in which we unwittingly

offend the predilections of our Hindu friends and betray ourselves to be strangers. Realise that we are marked men, who offend before opening our lips to speak. What can be done about this particular trespass is problematical. One fellow stranger of my acquaintance refuses to eat beef (reprehensible to the orthodox for cattle) even though available in his city. He eats other kinds of meat, but tries to avoid offence in at least one particular.

2. But somebody says, I know low-caste Hindus who eat beef. My answer to this is that if not beef, then some other article of our diet offends. I have lived fairly long in one Indian city, and wandered through most of its mohullas. It has come to the place where some body know me wherever I go in my city of three hundred thousand. In a certain low caste mohulla, a visitor from Bombay was temporarily staying and he felt some hesitation about me. But the people said, 'Oh, we know this sahib. He has been around for years'. But the relative, from Bombay was not at ease. He asked, 'Stranger, what do you eat?' I began cautiously to tell the truth. I said, I eat *chawal* (rice), *sag* (green leafy vegetables), *dal* (pulse), *khela* (bananas) . . . and went on to tell about the vegetables and fruit consumed. After a long list, I stopped. Then he put to me a question, 'Do you eat eggs?' I do not know whether he smelled this fact or not, but I was not going to tell a lie. My reply was followed by an abysmal silence. At last the head man told the young man from Bombay to hold his peace and that the community was friendly toward me even though my diet included such as egg. 'Egg' was a hurdle, and a high one.

Now my point regarding bodily odors induced by diet, and articles of food is simply to focus your attention upon the difficulty in becoming acceptable strangers. Let us turn now to customs easier to follow.

3. To raise your left hand in salute to an orthodox man, is to him disagreeable. The left hand is used for all private concerns in connection with the functions of the body, and is therefore polluted. The right hand is supposed to be free of such associations. To some, therefore, a wave of the left hand, however well intended, is an unfortunate barrier between a stranger and them.

4. It is not customary to shake hands in greeting. The stranger who tries to seize the hand of an orthodox man does not diminish the social distance between himself and the other, but rather increases it. The Indian may submit to such manual contact, but an upsurge of Hindu tradition from his sub-conscious mind is negative towards the outsider.

5. A man who publicly kisses a woman, even if she is his wife, commits a breach of social decorum. A brother would not think of taking such a liberty with a sister, or a son with his mother. It is difficult for them to understand how strangers, so sensible in many respects and possessed of some admirable qualities, can behave at a railway station in such fashion. The public caress which is so common within our families on occasions of reunion and farewell, isolates us from those who adhere to the traditions of this country.

6. It is quite wrong to exclaim over a friend's children, to snatch them up in your arms while commenting upon their excellent qualities. In my part of the country it is far better to regard children with silent but not too evident goodwill. One should be kind to them but non-committal. Praise of a child draws attention, excites desire or malice in bystanders (seen or unseen), and issues in mischief. This is specially the case among the illiterate masses, who lay store by the so-called 'evil eye'. If a beautiful child sickens and dies, the parents will attribute the misfortune to somebody's praise. It were far better to ignore a child or to notice some blemish and express comiseration. The stranger who overflows with compliments makes himself unwelcome or even abnoxious, betraying serious want of acquaintance with the customs of his would-be friends.

7. To inquire after the health of a man's wife is enough to bring some Indians to a full stop, and should never be done except with Indian gentlemen with whom you have perfect understanding. Similarly, it is unapardonable to ask a woman the name of her husband. No orthodox, self-respecting woman will give out his name. The reasons for this may lie far back in the magic of the Atharva Veda, and may not be recognized by some modern Hindus. It is enough for them that you have committed an inexcusable social blunder. They think it were better to escape from the presence of this rude stranger at the first opportunity.

8. I do not recall ever seeing an orthodox man or woman with a handkerchief in use. The sight of a stanger blowing his nose into a piece of cloth, and then putting the cloth into his pocket, is enough to make some of them feel sick. They go aside privately to relieve congestion in the nostrils, and deposit the matter in a secret place.[1]

Well, the customs of any people are numerous and no complete account of them can be given short of book. A stranger who wishes to meet his congenial Hindu hosts half-way should certainly avoid violating their socially prescribed modes of behavior, so far as in him lies. A serious student of Hinduism must live among the Hindus on terms of mutual esteem. This will not be possible if he acts like the proverbial bull in the crockery closet, trampling their social usages. Customs vary from district to district. It is the stranger's part to adhere to them in the hope of becoming a welcome guest.

II

This brings me to the subject of ideas, not abstruse, speculative ideas, but the ordinary, basic ideas of a culture. Unless a stranger informs himself as to the underlying concepts of the Hindus, his expectations will go awry, and his welcome in their midst may be delayed.

[1] Before talking about sanitation in India we should realize that certain other private procedures of us strangers are regarded by Hindus as filthy and abominable.

Take for instance, the stranger's habit of saying thank you. He has so many ways of expressing appreciation, such as 'Much obliged!' or, 'Grand of you!' or, 'You are one up on me now!' Even the stranger radio operators have their special abbreviation for saying thank you: 'CUL 73's.' One of the first phrases I tried to learn was to say thank-you in Hindi and in Urdu. But when I spoke the required words, the persons addressed gave unexpected reactions. Some simply stared at me in dismay. Others remained silent for some time and then began to chuckle as if to imply, 'This stranger knoweth not the import of what he saith!' This unnerved me. I thought my pronunciation must be too poor to permit understanding.

Meanwhile, I was saying thank you to Indians who spoke English and their invariable response was, 'Don't mention it!' I observed Indians receiving favours from other Indians but saying nothing. They would simply accept the boon in silence, without mentioning a word of gratitude. Have you ever heard a Hindu beggar express appreciation for a coin? Or a religious mendicant make any acknowledgement for a handful of rice? They positively don't mention it. A mendicant is commanded by the rules of his Order, to receive any gift in utter silence, almost without inspecting it. Why?

The reason lies in one of the basic ideas of Hinduism, called *nishkama karma*, or disinterested action. To perform certain duties for duties' sake only, with no thought of praise or gain, is one of the ways to salvation. *Nishkama karma*, they say, produces an equanimity of mind, through the renunciation beforehand of all thought of commendation or merit. A long continued and devoted practice of this way, has the effect (in Hindu religious experience) of removing and exterminating egoism, and in cutting the bonds imprisoning the individual soul in this world of rebirth. By giving thanks we tempt a man to pay attention to the fruit of his good actions, and so ensure him in the meshes of selfishness.

There are, indeed, two ways in which a favour to another may be done by us. We may be impelled to act by an inordinate desire to attain the pleasures of life, like name and fame, the good opinion of others, or reputation for merit. This is *sakama karma* or selfish action. Or, we may perform all good actions in a disinterested spirit, without any hope of reward. Such is *nishkama karma*. The Bhagavad Gita tells us that this latter way yields perfect peace of mind and a contented heart. One becomes free from all sorrow and misery, and his mind, being purified, rests in God. *Nishkama karma* enables one to rise above the sway of passions, and to establish himself firmly in God or Brahman. (Bhagavad Gita 2 and 3.) But by expressing thanks, you tempt the doer to desire the fruit of his actions.

While coming up to this hilltop in a private car, we passed a stalled bus. Our driver drew ahead to the side and called back an inquiry; so by shouting at one another the two drivers made us to follow the conversation. The busman said that the sprocket in his distributor was stuck, and that he had no key to release it. Our driver, who did

not know the bus man, produced a key and called to the other to come to fetch it. The bus man came, took the key without a word and walked away. Our driver stepped on the starter and drove off, expecting neither the return of the key, nor payment for the key, nor a word of thanks. He had done his duty without thought or reward.

But some of us strangers do not comprehend this ideology. We give favours and resent not being thanked for them. The American Congress, for instance, finds it difficult to give aid 'with no strings attached', and the Orient cannot understand us Yankees who expect some reward for our goodness. The West thinks the East ungrateful, and the East considers the West to be hopelessly ensnared in *Sakama karma.*

If we ambassadors of goodwill come to India hoping to do good and later to be thanked for our pains, the prognosis for our mental peace is not hopeful. If, on the other hand, we heap fulsome thanks upon a doer of *nishkama karma*, he may regard us as a spiritual hazard.

In a word, you should know the many basic concepts of Hinduism and regulate your expectations accordingly, in order to make yourself an acceptable and contented guest in India. This brings me to the subject of attitudes.

III

We may be familiar with the customs of the Hindus, and cognizant of their fundamental ideas; yet, our attitudes may discourage their effort to be gracious to us. They may decide we are too brittle, too rude, to inconsiderate to make fraternization possible. They may be compelled by our own attitudes to leave us isolated and alone. For instance:

The first strangers in this country took an attitude of hostility to the culture here. The writings of invading strangers in 1500 B.C. speak with undisguised contempt of the *dasyas.* The writings of A.D. 1500 record attempts to smash what was here. The books of A.D. 1800 have one main theme, and that is to change it completely. This past history is partly the ethnocentrism of strangers. Any guest with this attitude today is sure to be treated as he attempts to treat his hosts: namely, with hostility.

About the turn of the century, however, some strangers rejected the earlier attitude, and adopted a second: an attitude of sympathy. They began to make 'sympathetic studies' of Hinduism, and to discuss 'sympathetically' with Hindu friends. Considerable advance in mutual understanding was made in this new atmosphere. But the trouble with it was that sympathy sometimes smacked of condescension. Certain strangers gave the impression that they were prepared to listen patiently to what the Hindus had to say, but by premise there could, in the end be no validity in their 'weird notions.' Such a disguise could not go long undetected, and naturally was regretted by the people of this country. Again, sympathy may degenerate into a kind of pity, however unjustified. If somebody tells you he feels sorry for your benighted and impossible doctrines, and pities you for your dearest

and most sacred beliefs, you will not be overjoyed to see him come into view the next time. What kind of a welcome can you expect from the Hindus or from any classical people, if they sense a 'sympathetic' attitude in you?

To my mind there is only one attitude that squares with the facts, and that is an attitute of respect. Here is a culture that has come down to us through four thousand years. Here is a people who were debating abstruse problems of philosophy when our forefathers were worshipping the mistletoe in northern Europe. Here are illiterate sections of the population that know a contentment seldom found in the ceaseless striving of the West. Here are advanced Indians who can speak our language more accurately than we, and who know thirty-fold, nay, sixty-fold more about culture than we know about theirs. Here are forms of art that travellers come from all parts of the earth to behold. Here is the first successful experiment on a national scale to solve an international dispute without resort to arms. I say that the only justifiable attitude for a stranger in this country, is one of respect.

The remarkable thing is that the Hindus respect the stranger and what he stands for. They may not agree with him, but they accord him respect. They are quick to recognize the worth in his best traditions and in his religion. It seems to me that this is the intelligent attitude for both of us to take towards each other.

To Conclude, the stranger to Hinduism should begin by redirecting his own conduct. Let him acquire an acquaintance with the customs and usages of the Hindus, and discipline his behaviour so as not to offend them. Let him thoroughly understand the basic ideas of the Hindus and regulate his expectations thereby. Let him acquire a healthy admiration and respect for the ancient culture of the Hindus, and manifest the same. Then there is some real likelihood of his gaining a comprehension of Hinduism itself through friendly interchanges with his hosts, who, true to their natural impulses, may extend to him that kindly tolerance for which they are world-famous. He may never achieve the status of a native, but he can become known as an understanding friend.

THE UPANISHADS

A Christian Reader's Meditations (Part II)

By Dr Anjilvel V. Matthew, M.Ed., Ph.D.

Katha Upanishad IV

'This knowledge which you have gained is unattainable by reasoning; O, dearest, it can well be understood if it is taught by another. You are surely a man of firm resolve. May we find, O, Nachiketas, inquirers like you.'

Ours is an age of science, we want our intellect to be appealed to before we accept things for ourselves. Things that do not appeal to reason are likely to be neglected. On the other hand it should be recognized that there are certain things which cannot be comprehended or explained by a mere appeal to the known organs of sense. 'That knowledge is sometimes acquired in a super-natural manner, that is to say, acquired otherwise than through the known organs of sense is in my opinion', says T. W. Mitchell 'a statement of a fact of nature which men of science can no longer deny and should no longer neglect.' (In the Hibbert Journal for January 1928). Religious souls throughout the ages have believed in man's capacity to apprehend things which are not grasped by the intellect.

Reason is certainly important, but faith in the unseen things of life, things that are beyond the range of the organs of sense, is not unreasonable nor is it an ineffective sentiment. By faith people 'subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight armies of the aliens'. (Hebrews 11:33.)

But faith has its trials, extreme trials; and who lives by faith has to endure many things. *Satya dhriti vrata*—that is how Nachiketas is described: *fixed in truth, a man of firm resolve.* It is they who endure all things and endure unto the end that bear the fruits of faith. Some of the saints of God were tortured for their faith, but they cared not to buy their deliverence at the cost of their faith; others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; they were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins or goatskins; being destitute, afflicted and tormented. It is people who, in spite of such adversities, live with firm resolve, in touch with the source of all wisdom and truth, that show unto the world the grandeur of that region which we cannot reach through the organs of sense.

And faith is inspired in us by living contact with a Guru. The ever-present Christ is our Guru, the one who leads us into the knowledge of all things. When he opens our eyes, we see and understand. For it can be understood only when it is taught by a 'Prokta'. Until he opens our eyes, we are like the disciples who went to Emmaus with the Master but saw not His Glory.

'Open our eyes, O Lord, that we may see'.

V

I know that all riches are transitory; and that that constant thing cannot be obtained by the inconstant things; therefore was the Nachiketa fire fed by me and with transitory things I have obtained the eternal. (Katha II: 10).

The words here sound like a paradox, but students of the New Testament are familiar with similar paradoxes. Our Master tells us not to lay for ourselves treasures on earth where moth and mold attack them; and in another place he bids us to make ourselves friends with the mammon of unrighteousness. The Upanishad also seems to convey a similar meaning. No man can expect to be any way the better in his spiritual life by an incessant effort to grow rich or powerful. Material wealth is more often than not an encumbrance to the pilgrim soul. The impermanent and the transitory cannot comprehend the wealth of our inward being, nor is an abundance of the former an indication of the presence of the latter. On the other hand these two factors, material wealth and spiritual insight, may sometimes have what in modern language we may call a negative correlation. St Paul tells Timothy that love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. A popular poet says, *Kanakam moolam, Kamini moolam, Kalaham palavidham ulakil sulabham*, that many of the quarrels in society are caused by greed and lust.

It does not however follow that the spiritual and the material are necessarily opposed to each other. The possession of material wealth may enable its wise possessors to establish relations with other souls—and healthy relationship is the vitamin of our spiritual being. Transitory things cannot control the eternal, but the eternal expresses itself in the transitory, and many saints of God have been able to exclaim, as young Nachiketas did in the Kathopanish, that with transitory things they obtained the eternal: *anityairdravyaih praptavanasmin nityam.* Unless we make this use of the transitory it is likely to become for us a snare, a trap. Let us take care that the transitory is an instrument of spiritual progress, and not a chain that keeps us in bondage.

VI

That wise man grieves not who knows the great, the all-pervading Self, by which (Self) one perceives objects in the dreaming and in the waking condition. (Katha IV: 4.)

There is a very common theory that man is a hedonist, that the chief motive of life is the enjoyment of pleasure. Followers of this theory believe that in all experience, even in the realms of higher thinking and religion, he strives for the enjoyment of pleasure and the elimination of pain. Though this extreme hedonist view may be an unfair representation of the purposefulness of man and even of the lower animals, there is no doubt that certain experiences are painful and that man in common with, and even more than, the other animals, tries to avoid or overcome that which pains him. And it is the glory of

man that he has been able to think of grief and joy as not always necessarily associated with the presence or absence of material objects.

The happiness of man consists not in the abundance of the things he possesses. He may enjoy 'the glory of the whole world', and still be without happiness. His peacefulness, contentment and joy—things that make up his happiness—depend on his outlook on life. In the Upanishad text that we read today, we are told that that man is free from misery who, living in this world, seeks to know the great, the All-pervading Spirit. It was only by the knowledge of this ever present spiritual reality that the great and intrepid ascetic of the first century, confined to a dungeon in distant Rome, cried out triumphantly in joyful notes that the God whom he served would supply all the needs of his helpless followers and admonished them to rejoice, 'and again I say unto you, Rejoice'. In another situation, he said, 'I know whom I have believed'.

It is knowledge that saves an afflicted man from the poignancy of grief—not the knowledge that comes from a puffed up little head, but the knowledge that springs from experience, experience of the fact that we are not like a rudderless ship tossed about by every passing wind but that our destiny is safe in the hands of Him that calls us.

The Lord Jesus prays unto the Father: 'O righteous Father the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent'.

THE MID-INDIA REGION

By Dr Henry H. Presler

Note: This regular feature in The India Cultures Quarterly is contributed by the director of the Department of Organized Research of Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur, M.P., India, who assumes that a regional approach to the study of Indian cultures is an induction from the diverse data.

In the previous instalment in this series on oral mythology, I concluded with the remark that oral myths are not as incomprehensible as they first sound, provided one places them in the thesis being defended in these articles, to wit: Some oral myths have their origin in the real world of human competition, others symbolize that real world, and others are abstractions thereof (projected into the unseen realms of the super-natural).

So far we have assumed that oral mythology is to be understood, and that we are searching for a key piece around which to assemble a puzzle. Possibly, however oral myths are not supposed to be comprehended (by their very nature glorying in the inscrutable and ineffable). It may be that there is another category of value besides goodness, beauty and truth, namely, wonder. Think what would be lost if the faces of little children could never again be wonder struck by the ways of the ant. Think what may be lost if mankind fails to gaze with wonder at the Milky Way, and busies himself only with schemes for space ships. If the genesis of the oral myth is wonder, and if its function is to keep faith alive in the breasts of men, then this effort to 'comprehend' it is as destructive as chemical analysis to the perfume of flowers. The major question is this: Is life more really lived from the vantage point of the artist? How enjoyable to listen to the debate on this question, as between the romanticist and the rationalist in philosophy! But since the writer is a social scientist, he must fulfil his fuction by trying to comprehend the continuum from earth to heaven, and to place oral myths somewhere between its extremities.

Symbolizations

Our discussion has reached the approximate mid-point of the continuum, namely, the symbolization myth, i.e., an oral myth that duplicates[1] the human competitive pattern in an other-than-human

[1] In order to recognize the identity of the earthly plot and the heavenly plot, one must have the following resources: 1. Objectivity (suggesting the possibility that a person nurtured in the culture producing the complex of oral myths may not always be capable of uncovering his own mental patterns and looking at them in relation to oral myths). 2. Linguistic experience (long acquaintance with and practice of the language in which the myth is couch-

realm. The plots are replicas of behavioral events on earth. The actors are human and divine.

Our previous instalment showed how men may not realize that the gods act like men in patterns of competition, rivalry, trials of strength, struggles, conflicts and the like. Their obtuseness was illustrated by two myths. Next, we showed that men in competition are able to compel the gods or demons or spirits to obey them, either by magic or by devotion (bhakti). The plots of the oral myths cited as evidence were placed against the background of the many actualization myths narrated earlier in this series, and were shown to be replicas of competitive patterns among humans. Our last instalment had reached a stage in oral mythology in which the gods are worsted by men, but who, as subordinates, shame men into compromises.

Proceeding, we come to the stage at which the gods themselves decide to investigate competition between the low and high castes for divine favour. They send an investigator to discover the 'facts in the case', and the upshot of the following oral myth is that the criteria for true religiosity conceived by men on earth, are rubber-stamped in heaven. In other words, the approval of the gods symbolizes what men have already decided on earth. The divinities exactly mentalize the competition on earth.

How the Divinities Found Out Who is Truly Devout

Once in the heavens, the gods and goddesses wanted to count how many devout men are on this earth. They sent their well-known messenger to take a census of all truly religious people. This messenger was actually a disciple of Great God B—and being a man, he was able to go from earth to heaven and back again. Upon arriving down on earth, he first went to the households of high caste men. There he expected to watch the women at their devotions; but, alas! they were just as pious as their husbands, to wit: they had no time for religious rituals, but they were busy with the froth of social life. So he turned to watching a man. His main object was to earn a living by being a priest. He shaved his head and let his *choti* grow long, covered his face with sandalwood paste, and blew the conch lustily, with the single object of *paisa* (monetary offerings). So it was with all (sic) high caste households. After this disappointment, the one sent from heaven went to a low caste house. There he saw the poor man at the end of his day's troublesome work, singing merrily the *bhajans* (folk songs) of different gods and goddesses. He saw the women of that house loving their husbands and paying respect to them; but they loved the gods more than their husbands. So was it with all (sic) low caste households. Wherever the messenger went he found the poor and depressed people worshipping god whole-heartedly, but the well-to-do and so-called (sic) high caste people were away from the path of true religion.

So the gods came to know that the competition between the high and low caste for weal, was a struggle in which the latter were worsted

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ed). 3. Acculturization (the field worker must have lived so long among the informants as to have appropriated to himself their mental and social habits, and be aware of having done so). 4. Data in abundance, by which I mean hundreds of oral myths from that one culture, some of which he has heard scores of times.

by other than true virtue. By this oral myth the informant wanted to convey the idea that in spite of their low birth and status in society, low castes will get victory in the end, by their pure faith and the preferential love of the divinities towards them. But the writer wants to remind the reader of his thesis, that earthly competition is foisted upon heaven, where it symbolizes the competition on earth.

But sometimes the gods do not need to take a census of the truly devout, already knowing their own. They may intervene in rivalries and disputes at any moment.

How the Divinity Saved the Priest from the Demons

Once I was sleeping as usual on the chabutra (foundation platform) of this temple. I like to sleep there during all three of the dry seasons, provided it is not too cold and no rain interrupts. At about midnight, four demons came near that tree, and suddenly darted at me. Two grabbed my arms and two my legs. They were trying to throw me to a great distance away. So they started swinging me higher and higher, and when about to send me hurtling through the air, maybe into another province, the goddess instantaneously appeared. She opened her mouth and said loudly, 'Sevak!' (in effect, He is my servant!). The four demons dropped me on the ground and went in all directions. Since then they never turned up.

Such a story is not only a testimony. To define it thus is to fail to see to whom it is told. The oral myth is almost never told to one person only. Invariably there is a crowd containing all ages, individuals who listen silently, absorbing the story. I do not recall ever having heard a member of the crowd expressing any doubt or misgiving about the content. They simply learn it, and retell it. Usually the story has been told many times before, and is a part of the community memory. That the events described originated within the experience of the narrator is natural; after all, what oral myth does not originate in somebody's experience? What was at first telling a private experience, becomes public property once told. First and last, the tale is a symbolization, in which the divinity intervention is symbolic of the earthly requirements.

More often, however, men do not need divine help so much as divine displeasure. In other words, rebellious men need to be given the rap. In the following oral myth, note how the divinity takes sides in the strife of men, playing a role in the drama no different from that of a human policeman whom he symbolizes.

How the Upstart Engineer Was Shown His Place

About one hundred years ago an Englishman was in charge of constructing a new road, which nowadays we call M—Road in our city. The workers, while digging, found a stone idol of a divinity. They brought it to the engineer in charge, and requested that the idol should be established on a shrine, proposing that the Public Works Department donate the bricks and cement. But the engineer did not care for their request, and instead, ordered the workers to throw it into the tank. So the idol was thrown into the tank by order of the engineer.

That night the divinity appeared to the engineer, ordering himself to be put back in the same place from which he had been dug, and that no road should be constructed over the spot. But again the in-charge did not heed the request, and simply defied the divinity. The following night the divinity appeared again in a dream, and threw the engineer out of bed on to the floor, seriously hurting him; then the divinity disappeared.

The engineer was frightened, and the next day he called the workers, asking them to take the idol out of the tank and to appropriate some bricks and cement, constructing a suitable shrine for him. The engineer himself superintended the building, and then a Brahmin priest came and established (*sthapit kiya*) the idol as you see today.

The reaction of the divinity symbolized the outrage felt by the workmen. In the next oral myth (which is narrated by many different informants) the competition is in the realm of *izzat*. This word may be inaccurately translated as prestige, or as one's standing in the eyes of others, or as egoism. Izzat is important everywhere, especially in Indian cultures where izzat is the individual's own definition of himself within the pyramid of social strata. The British invasion of and triumph in India was a blow to Indian izzat, and their imported inventions, including the steam engine, was an additional stroke. Indian izzat was mortified by the railway trains, just as American izzat was mortified by Russia's Sputnik I. So a struggle ensued over prestige. In this psychological competition, the divinity intervened and saved the faces of her own.

How We Proved Ourselves Superior to Our Rulers

When the British came to India they started laying their railway tracks. After the tracks were put down a distance of many miles, they brought their first engine and set it on the rails. The fireman built the fire under the water, and all that. But when the driver pulled the iron handle, the engine did not move. So the English officers came running, and put oil here and there, and tested this and that, but still the wheels would not turn around. The British people were non-plussed, and did not know what to do. Then they asked our people what was the reason. One *panda* (low caste priest) came and told that the goddess does not want that the engine should move. She has held it fast, and unless pleased by offerings, she will not lose her grip on it. Thereupon, the English people had to offer coconuts and black goats to the goddess. After that, the engine moved forward. Now this is the reason you see red colour on these railway engines. Red is the colour of blood, and the goddess likes the blood of goats. This red means submission to her.

The reader will realize that such a myth as the foregoing would be placed near the supernatural and of the continuum of authority. Men no longer control the gods (as in the oral myths of the previous instalment), but are themselves controlled. The pivot of competition has shifted in favour of the supernatural. Mere men are being put in their proper place. But notice that the supernatural plays the human game. The values to be fought for are humanly chosen values. The contests are such as arise on earth. The gods take a wholly subjective interest in the struggles of men, and are not concerned with a different order of values or procedures. The competitive pattern

in the mind of the divinities symbolizes exactly (sic) the earthly pattern. Hence, I am naming these, symbolization myths.

The next oral myth repeats the same struggle for izzat or psychological dominance, as took place between the British and their subjects.

Military Dominance Does Not Mean Social Ascendency

There are images of our goddess all over mid-India, but her home place is at Z—. There her temple is on top of a really high hill. You have to climb up 763 steps to reach her temple. There is beautiful scenery all around. Once an Englishman wanted to live up there. He even tried to build his house at a point higher than that of the temple of our goddess. Nothing happened until the house was finished. Then what? It caught fire and burned to ashes. Also, swarms of bees came and stung that man. So he at once ran down the hill and confessed the power of the goddess who had pronounced a doom on his house the previous night in a dream.

From time to time the British Colonial Government brought foreign Oriental into the Indian army. Whole regiments would consist of individuals belonging to a different nation, language and religion. Their presence raised other competitive struggles for psychological dominance, into which the divinities inserted themselves on human terms.

The Regiment That Tried to Lord It Over Us

Some fifty years ago there came a Y—Regiment of soldiers to this place. They pitched their tents close to the spot where you now see the shrine. They used to strut about in the bazar and mock us. One night four soldiers decided to remove the idol from its place, but, do you know, for all their strength and sweat, they could not budge it. One of our coolies, W—by name, came and told us. The next night we (who could not stop them) hid ourselves about one hundred yards away in that bush, to see what would happen. Many more Y—soldiers came, and put a big rope around the image and tried to pull it out of its place, but while pulling, the rope broke and two of them were badly hurt in their ribs. So the rest came near with a crowbar, and tried to move it, but all of a sudden, with loud cries they ran pell-mell to their tents. We could not understand their flight, but felt sure the divinity had intervened somehow or other. In the morning some of those soldiers came to draw water, and began to say to us that there was an enormous snake living near the idol. But none of us had ever seen such.

It should not be supposed that contests take place only between the ingroup and the out-group, between Indians and foreigners, between 'us' and 'them'. Competition for the favour of the public takes place between our own people. In the following account a local doctor with high prestige refused to respect a certain priest. Both had the same constituency, which made the disdain of the doctor galling to the priest who claimed to speak with considerable authority. Both were members of the same caste and religion, and the struggle for the ear of the masses was intense. Here again, the goddess became involved in this competition, like any earthly queen, and the issue between the two men is of absolute significance to the supernatural. The cognized dispute in which the goddess takes a side, is the dispute on earth. The former symoblizes the latter.

On the Humiliation of a Proud Doctor

You must be knowing Dr V. who is famous in our city. In his prime he had many patients in this ward. His patients would come here and have *darshan* of the image, but that proud doctor would never turn aside to see her. He used to take an afternoon walk. Once when accompanied by his friends, he was urged to come in here to behold the divinity. But he said he would not like to do that, and that religion is all bogus. But his friends pressed him sorely, and not wishing to offend the entire community by making an issue of it, he came towards this *sthan* (sacred location). The priest met him and recommended meditation for two minutes at least. So the doctor stood silently gazing at the image. Suddenly he fell down in front of this idol and became unconscious. His friends carried him over by that well and dashed water in his face. He awoke and excalimed, 'I saw the goddess with all her ornaments, swords and flowers'. This was his experience.

Occasionally a rich man takes on airs, to the secret resentment of his poor neighbours. There is not much they can do about it if he owns the land and houses, tilled and occupied by them. They may 'talk up' to him to a certain safe extent, just enough to pull him down a bit in the ears of listeners; but such an opportunity comes rarely, especially if he makes no economic or social mistakes to be used against him on some public occasion. To humble the landowner is a delicate undertaking, and must be done with a legitimate grievance in one's own favour, and in such a social situation that everyone may know about it, thus preventing his taking reprisals against a brave but poverty-stricken tenant. While waiting for such a chance, the strain may reach the point where the divinity makes the earthly competition his affair. Such divine but symbolic behaviour may be seen in the following oral myth.

It Is More Comfortable to Give a Well than to Receive It

You know our landowner? He began to dig the well close to our shrine of Divinity U—. It takes a rich man to dig a well, as we ordinary people could not afford it. Half way down into the earth, the workmen ran against a boulder. The landowner promised Divinity U—that if he succeed in removing the boulder without having to start a hole in a different spot, that he would offer a coconut, build a *pucca* (first class cemented) shrine, and make everything permanent. So the workmen continued digging and at last five men were able to remove the boulder. Our landowner was pleased, and believed his prayer was heard. So after reaching water and putting the well in order, he got the mouth of the well cemented, but did not build the shrine.

One day one of his cows strayed this way, and walked straight into the well. But three heavy bamboos had been somehow laid over the opening and the cow did not go down. His servants were able to get her back on the ground. The landowner realized that the cow had been saved by the divinity, and the very next day he commenced building the shrine as before promised. Then he called a priest and got the shrine sanctified and acceptable to the divinity as a religious place. Our landowner promised that everyday water would be offered to the divinity. But he expected us to do it. He told us that we could use the well, and knew that as a natural consequence we would offer water every day to our god.

Three months passed, and he never came near the shrine feeling quite comfortable in having given a well to the poor. One day his daughter came to draw water from the well, and let down her bucket. She let it sink into the

water, and then tried to draw it up. Of a sudden the rope broke and the bucket fell down to the bottom. The girl ran home and told the matter. The landowner sent his servant with a hook. After some fifteen minutes the boy managed to hook the handle of the bucket, but he could not pull it forth. He yelled to a man to help him, and the two pulled with all their might, but the bucket would not budge. The servant went back to tell the situation. Then the landowner came here with a coconut and broke it, and did obeisance to the divinity, after which they hooked the bucket and pulled it out easily.

Such proud and haughty men in our local culture, create social strains, setting in a pattern of rivalry. This rivalry may not be a struggle to obtain the same status (impossible in stable and hierarchical strata, conditioned by birth). The rivalry is rather as to who shall compel the other to live up to the full expectations of his own status. Here is no contest between the 'haves' and 'have nots', as in other societies. Here, instead, is a match between 'defaulters' and 'censors,' i.e., between people who are not doing what society expects from their status, and those of higher or lower status endeavouring to force them to live up to expectation. This kind of competition is nicely put in the following oral myth:

The Plight of an Unrepentant Violator of His Own Norms

Five years ago a high caste man bought this plot of land. He wanted to build a bigger building than was here. But this sacred pipal tree was extending two huge branches contrariwise. So he decided to cut off the branches, which nobody, leastwise a high caste man, should do. In fact, our fathers have told us that not even a leaf may be plucked from a pipal tree, within which god T— lives. So the people of this mohulla tried their best to dissuade that high caste man from cutting off the branches, but he would not listen to anybody. He violated the way of his fathers. Then he commenced his building. After some days something happened to him, nobody knew what, and he could not complete but half the building. You see now that only a portion of it is done, and the rest is unfinished. Since then that high caste man does not dare to come to this pipal tree, not even in the day time. People say that god T— came to him in a dream and warned that the day he comes near the pipal, on that day he will die right on the spot where the branches were. Moreover, since he cut this pipal there is no peace in his mind. He rushes here and there, spending only a few days in his own house. Unless and until he offers something to god T- and repents, he neither can complete the building nor recover his mental peace. He tried to sell the building, but succeeded in disposing only of the completed half to a refugee. The refugee came the first day and offered something to god T— and since then has worshipped at this tree every day. So he is becoming prosperous day by day. There is no sickness or sorrow in his family.

Notice again that the divinity recognizes the importance of this competition between the common people and their superior, and takes sides. The competition in which divine beings are interested is a replica of the earthly, and symbolizes the same.

The question of cutting a sacred tree is a serious one in the city, where a rise in land values tempts the owners to covet costly space. The non-owners think only of their traditions and answer the question with a united, No. The owner defies them with his solitary, Yes.

If a shrine has existed at the foot of the tree for some years, the common people can get out an injunction to prevent the cutting, and be sustained through the courts. Otherwise, the struggle is as between public and private opinion, and the divinities take as much interest in the outcome as do humans.

How the Divinity Upheld Public Opinion Against Private Ownership

There was another person about twenty years back, who owned this land. One day he decided to cut this pipal tree from the very root. He, too, wanted to construct a building on the spot. But we were against him. He engaged four coolies, and promising them an unusual wage, persuaded them to cut down and remove the pipal tree on the following day. But in the night all four of them fell ill, and not one was able to get to his feet to come to chop down the tree. When the owner who engaged them went to call them, he in great surprise, found every one of them sorely sick. He asked them the nature and cause of their illness. Everyone told him the same story. Each said that god T—had appeared to him in a dream the night before and warned him not to cut the pipal, and each was so frightened, and got sick. The owner tried to rally them but not one dared to raise an axe, and each remained lying flat on the floor. So after that nobody would hire himself to this purpose, and the owner had to give up his plan to cut down the sacred tree.

The contention (as to whether men will do what they ought) may also center in the attempt of the public to force a private individual to keep his promise. The contestants may wax stubborn if the promise was for the public convenience. The issue is as real in the unseen realm, where divinities become equally concerned in the struggle. The following oral myth is told as if the most interested parties were in the unseen, as if the decisive action originated up yonder. My thesis is that the way of telling the story, reverses the cause that effect relation. The excitement in the unseen is rather symbolic of the excitement on earth.

Beware of Promising the People What You Do Not Give

There was a certain high caste rich man whose house was close to a shrine. One day, wishing to jolly the priest and to ingratiate himself with the people, he said, 'I will build a cement *chabutra* for the god, that his sacred location may be safe against the monsoons'. The priest and the people heard him with joy. But, the rich man immediately forgot his promise. He made no plans, engaged no workmen, purchased no cement. So after one month's time, what happened? A large section of his house wall facing the shrine, broke in the night and collapsed. Next morning he inspected the ruin, and seeing the priest standing there, asked, 'What could cause my wall to fall down?' The priest replied, 'Sir, did you not promise this divinity to build him a cement chabutra? Have you written any plan, or spoken to your overseer, or set aside any materials? No, there is nothing, absolutely nothing done by you in this matter. So the divinity became angry, and fell upon your house, and pushed down the wall. Such is your condition today, and who knows what the divinity may do next while you are asleep in what remains of your house?' The rich man, on the next day, engaged some coolies, brought all the materials to make the chabutra, and within forty-eight hours it was completed. Since that time no more of the rich man's house has fallen down.

Summarizing this experiment with oral myths, we began by noticing the importance of competition in the everyday affairs of men. Oral myths describing the context, types and procedures of earthly competition were presented, from which the non-moral, egoistic, crass nature of human competitive behaviour was recognized. We also saw that competition within a culture is channelled by the societal pattern, and furnished with the ideas, customs, relationships and artefacts of that particular collection of humans. Competition does not exist apart from these factors, but expresses itself through them. Oral myths embodying this realism are called by me, Actualizations.

Next, we noticed oral myths in which super-natural beings behave competitively. Sometimes the spirits are engaged in exactly the same contest arising on earth. The divinities appear to share the identical values, motivations, and procedures that are operating in human wrangling. The concern of the divinities symbolizes what is happening on earth, and I call the oral accounts thereof, Symbolizations.

In another class of oral mythology, struggle against one another is in a super-natural setting. In such oral myths the context, values, motivations and procedures are embellished with the characteristics and powers of super-natural beings. But beneath all such mighty appearance, we discern the pattern of earthly competition in abstraction. I call such oral myths, Projections. To this latter class we shall turn in the next instalment.

A New Translation by R. D. IMMANUEL

CHAPTER VIII

Loving

Note: Because this chapter is included in the section dealing with family and home, it is to be inferred that the word 'Love' is taken to refer only to love of wife and children.

Stanza 1

Is there a bolt to shut love inside (the heart)? Out will it come in the form of tears when the loved ones are seen in distress.

Stanza 2

Those who do not love belong unto themselves. But even the bones of those that love belong to others.

Stanza 3

Learned people say that the soul's connection with the body is for expressing love.

Note: Many schools of Indian thoughts hold that the soul does not act. The Samkhya compares the soul to a lame man and the body to a blind man.

Stanza 4

Love yields (as its fruit) the desire of the loved ones, and that desire yields glorious friendship.

Note: The idea here seems to be that a man who loves his wife and children, will have many friends.

Stanza 5

The glory of love on earth is the attainment of heavenly bliss.

Note: Love on earth here is the love of the husband for his wife and children. This domestic affection is a stepping stone to the attainment of eternal bliss.

Stanza 6

Those that do not know, say, 'Love is the foundation for goodness'. But it is also the means of rooting out evil.

Stanza 7

Just as the sun dries up boneless creatures, so, goodness dries up the loveless (hearts).

Note: Stanza 7 is a complementary statement of stanza 6. In one love roots out evil and in the other goodness roots out lovelessness.

Stanza 8

Trying to live in a home where there is no love is like trying to sprout a drystick in a desert.

Stanza 9

What can outward acts do, if there is no inward love?

Note: The word 'urupu' translated here as 'acts' is not good. It literally means organs or members of the body. Parimelagar in his commentary rejects this interpretation and says the word means all circumstances, and influences, favourable to action.

Stanza 10

The one that has love, has a living body, but the one that has no love, has only bones covered with skin and flesh. (That is he is a corpse).

Chapter IX

Hospitality

Stanza 1

The householder with the comforts of homelife exists for the sake of hospitality.

Note: Hospitality is used specially to mean giving food to ascetics, but in the larger sense a householder is expected to be 'hospitable' that is to give food when needed to the following five classes of people. Gods, forefathers (in the form of ceremonies like giving Pinda) ascetics, guests and lastly to relatives.

Stanza 2

It is not good for a man to partake by himself even death-preventing-medicines while a guest waits outside.

Stanza 3

He who receives guests daily and feeds them will not become poor.

Stanza 4

Lakshmi (the goddess of wealth and prosperity) will reside gladly in the home of one who is hospitable (that is one who receives guests).

Stanza 5

Does the man who eats what is left over after the guests have been fed, need to sow his fields?

Note: The answer expected is an emphatic 'No', In *Thevaram* God is called 'He who causes sprouting without seeds'. So the general idea here is God will take care of him and his fields.

Stanza 6

He who feeds his guests and waits for some more to come before partaking his own meals will be a good guest in heaven.

Stanza 7

Feeding guests has not one fixed value. It is a sacrifice whose value depends upon the being to whom the sacrifice is made.

Note: According to Tamil writers sacrifices are of five kinds-offered respectively to Brahm, Gods, forefathers, men and demons. Of these five, hospitality belongs to the fourth class, men. Even of them giving food to an ascetic carries more merit than giving food to a non-ascetic.

Stanza 8

Those who do not earnestly offer the sacrifice of feeding guests will by hard efforts amass (wealth) and lose it (before they could use the same).

Stanza 9

In fools is to be found the foolishness of not feeding guests; this is truly poverty in wealth.

Stanza 10

Smelling causes Anicca flowers to fade. A sourfaced look drives away guests.

Note: Anicca is an Indian plant whose flower droops and fades away if one plucks it from the plant and smells it.

Chapter X

Sweet Speaking

(The word sweet is not used in any derogatory sense; the highest ethical value is attached to it.)

Stanza 1

Sweet words are those that proceed from the mouth of one who knows truth and speaks in love without guile.

Note: The words 'Sweet' and 'good' are used only in this sense in this chapter.

Stanza 2

A bright face with sweet kindly words is even more efficient than hearty gifts.

Stanza 3

It is an ethical duty (dharm) to speak sweetly with a smiling face and loving look.

Stanza 4

The man who has pleasing words for all will not suffer from dire poverty.

Stanza 5

Humility and sweet words are true ornaments. There is no other ornament.

Stanza 6

Sweet words decreases one's demerits and increases his merits.

Stanza 7

Words that swerve not from virtue yield goodness and gratitude as results.

Note: Some commentators paraphrase this as follows: Speaking good words to others brings as results righteousness (in this world) and virtue or dharm (in the world to come.)

Stanza 8

Words that do not hurt, gives pleasure in this world and the next.

Stanza 9

Why should a man, who has enjoyed the sweetness of good words, speak to others words that are not good?

Stanza 10

A man that uses hurtful words while he has sweet words in store is like one who eats unripe fruits when he has plenty of ripe ones available.

Note: Most of the South Indian fruits when taken before they are fully ripe cause severe indigestion.

Chapter XI

Sense of Gratitude

Stanza 1

Even heaven and earth cannot repay the good deed done to us by one to whom we have not rendered any service previously.

Note: The love, care, and service of parents come under this category.

Stanza 2

Though small a good deed rendered at the right moment is greater than the world itself.

Stanza 3

If valued correctly, a good deed rendered expecting no returns is vaster than the ocean itself.

Stanza 4

Great men count good deeds of the size of a mustard seed to be as large as that of a plamyra tree.

Stanza 5

The greatness of a good deed rendered to others does not depend upon that deed. Rather, it depends upon the nature of the person unto whom it is rendered.

Stanza 6

Forget not the friendship of faultless ones; nor forsake the friend who helped you in your adversity.

Stanza 7

(*Good*) *people will remember for seven births the friendship of him who warded them off their difficulties.*

Note: 'Warded off' literally swept clean off.

Stanza 8

Do not ever forget any good rendered to you. But as for an evil done, it is good to forget that, that very day.

Stanza 9

If a man, who has once done to us one good deed, is now doing so much harm as seeking to kill us the remembrance of that one good deed is sufficient to wipe off all our sense of injury.

Stanza 10

There are ways of redemption from any kind of sin, But from ingratitude there is no way out. (*That is, it is an unforgivable sin.*)

Note: The following are usually considered to be unforgivable sins: Cutting off the udder of cows, killing Brahmans, causing abortions, and destroying temples.

K. M. Panikkar: *Hindu Society at Cross Roads.* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1955) pp. 114.

This book by one of India's distinguished statesman deals with some of the burning issues facing Hindu Society today. The author sees in the caste system and the joint family—the twin pillars of Hindu social organization—the roots of a host of evils like untouchability. These two institutions (caste and joint family) militate against any reorganization of society on an equaliterian basis. He also finds that these two (caste and joint family) as they are practised today have no basis in religion. The fragmentation of castes into subcastes, was not at all known to the Vedic seers. So, 'the question involved is not one of religious toleration but of social defence', because any society which is based on unlimited toleration has to face nothing but license, chaos and confusion. No society can be based on such a basis. Therefore the exact problem that has to be faced in India is how to abolish evils like the joint family and the caste which try to perpetuate in the name of religious toleration undesirable consequences like untouchability of masses and social and legal inequalities of the sexes.

But an impartial study of history proves that caste and joint family are only man-made and have no religious basis. The only real basis of these twin evils is custom. It is custom unregulated by a central authority or social behaviour. This absence of social authority makes gradual modifications to make adjustment with new environments caused by the changing of conditions and advance of time more or less impossible. The Hindu law laid down thousands of years ago, and based on the growth of local customs cannot satisfy the modern educated mind.

How are these evils to be uprooted? Can the state legislate on the matter? The author's conclusion is that legislation cannot be thorough or successful, unless the social conscience is aroused. On the other hand a few peoples' social conscience by itself has not got the authority to make laws upon people. So, both must go hand in hand.

The modern state is based on the conception of a purposive organization of society. It is not merely an administrative institution. So, the state has to concern itself more and more with the organization of life in social and economic fields.

The author goes on to discuss the various impacts made on Hindu society today. Acceptance of the fullest implication of democracy by basing it on adult franchise by the constitution of India creates an entirely new environment to the people. The breakdown of feudal traditions and the dissolution of the 'Native State', is another change of great magnitude.

Other impacts discussed in this book are, communism, industrial society, science, thought etc.

So, Panikkar has great expectations. This consists in the transformation of the inchoate mass of Hindu peoples into a community

which is vitally integrated. In this new community the priestly class of Brahmans will not be the foremost because it will be secular and if it has a religious basis, that basis will be 'to make the religious truths of Hinduism shine without being obscured by Customs and irrational social forms.' Moreover, this society is being built not for the intellectuals nor for a reformer, it is an upraising of the lower classes.

Panikkar thinks that since social life is different from religious life, the reformations proposed by the state, or those that are taking place on account of the various impacts, will not affect the central core of the Religion of the Hindus. Such in brief is the summary of the book.

Panikkar's book is thought provoking. His arguments are straight forward and his reasoning is clear. However, one would question his basic assumption that religion and social customs are '*in no way integrally connected*,' with each other (page 99; italics ours). Again he maintains that family is a social conception not a religious one. To a certain extent this is true. But does not religion enter into every phase of human life and by its dynamic power transform it?

ANJILVEL V. MATTHEW, *Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil* (Satara: Rayat Shiksan Sanstha, 1957) pp. 361.

Here is the fascinating biography of a man of sterling worth and towering personality. *Karmaveer* is the unofficial title, affectionately and reverently given by the public to Bhaurao Patil. It means a 'hero in action'. Patil has no college education, but he has made it possible for thousands of young men to attend university classes. He was not and is not rich, nor does he beg people to give him money for founding schools, hostels or colleges. Yet he has been able to establish 3 arts colleges, 7 training colleges, 11 hostels, 70 high schools, and 303 primary schools and has organized them so well that they are running smoothly. Giving education to the masses is only a part of the ambition of this great philanthropist of vision, resourcefulness and remarkable achievement. His main aim was, and continues to be to uplift the neglected peasants of his province and make them real persons by giving them education and raising their social status. He fought against untouchability and from the very beginning of his career made it a point that in all the hostels he started the high caste and low caste boys should study, play and sleep together like members of the same family. The remarkable thing is, no one made any objection to this arrangement and many high caste youngmen sought and were given admission in these hostels. His emphasis was always on self help. Students were expected to work to support themselves and the teachers whom he employed were men of noble ideals and were willing to accept a salary that was barely sufficient to meet their needs. Since these teachers were community workers he expected the community to take an interest in the welfare of these sacrificing teachers, who worked untiringly for the development of the community.

In fact he is the Booker T. Washington of the peasants of the Maharashtra.

However the Karmaveer's life was not a bed of roses. No man becomes a saint in his sleep. At every turn in his life he was compassed with what seemed to be insurmountable difficulties. His people did not understand him. His friends failed him often. His enemies threatened him. He was always in financial difficulties. But he never lost sight of his ideals; complete equality of all people, manual labour as a means of education, and the adoption of patient, persistent and non-violent methods to achieve one's aims.

These and other inspiring details in a life time of unique achievement are beautifully described in these pages. The author is a born story teller. So, the book fully packed with human interest and lively incidents reads like a novel. It would be difficult for the average man who starts to read the book to leave it aside till he finishes it. As a historian Dr Matthews is very accurate in his information. The various political, social, economic, and cultural forces that have affected the life of the Karmaveer have been carefully described in their true historical perspective. But above all the author is a leading educational psychologist in India, and he has described with singular skill and rare ability the evolution of a great soul. So, here is rich creamy food for thought to the student of sociology, cultural anthropology, and political history of India.

So, we commend this book unreservedly, and hope the author will write many more books.

R. D. Immanuel

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